

ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR



a contemporary theatre presents

ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR by Alan Ayckbourn

September 29 — October 22, 1977 Presented by special arrangements with Samuel French, Inc.

Director	Raymond Clarke
Scene Designer	
Property Master	
Costume Designer	Sally Richardson
Lighting Designer	Jody Briggs
Technical Director	Phil Schermer
Stage Manager	
Assistant Stage Manager	Michael Weholi

THE PLACE:

ACT I Sidney and Jane Hopcroft's kitchen. Last Christmas ACT II Geoffrey and Eva Jackson's kitchen. This Christmas ACT III Ronald and Marion Brewster-Wright's kitchen. Next

Christmas

THE TIME:

The present

THERE WILL BE TWO 15-MINUTE INTERMISSIONS

THE CAST in order of appearance

Donald Ewer							 				Sidney
Barbara Berge											
Robert Cornthwaite	ions Lot	18 7	1.	olili	(a)			116	 	J	Ronal
Barbara Lester						110		2000	 	1	Mario
Marion Lines							 		 		Eva
Saylor Cresswell										ev	Geoff

THE COMPANY



BARBARA BERGE (Jane) who has studied at the Royal Academy and has received bronze, silver and gold medals for acting from the London Academy of Dramatic Art, has been in many Broadway, off-Broadway and regional theatre productions. On Broadway she understudied the roles of "Gwendolyn" and "Cecily" for the Circle in the Square's production of THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST, and "Ruth" in THE NORMAN CONQUESTS. Off-Broadway she played "Nance" in FEMALE TRANSPORT, "Sally Bowles" for the Tosos Theatre's production of I AM A CAMERA, "Collette" in THE HOSTAGE and "Lady Herodias" in NOW SHE DANCES, and "Lizavetta" in the NYC Repertory Co.'s production of MONTH IN THE COUNTRY. Regionally, she has been featured in THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST, MACBETH, THE LESSON and THE RIVALS. Among her roles at the Royal Academy, she played "Maria" in TWELFTH NIGHT.



ROBERT CORNTHWAITE (Ronald) last appeared at ACT as Ephraim Cabot in last season's production of DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS. He has appeared on ACT's stage in WHAT THE BUTLER SAW, THE BIRTHDAY PARTY, THE BALCONY, and ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD. At the Seattle Repertory Theatre he appeared in RICHARD II. Most of Robert's work has been in television and films, including a recent role in this season's LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY on ABC, movie roles in THE THING, MONKEY BUSINESS, SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR, WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?, FUTUREWORLD, and COLOSSUS: THE FORBIN PROJECT. This 50th anniversary of the Lindbergh flight saw the revival of the classic film THE SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS, in which Robert had a principal role. He has been nominated twice by the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle for the best performance of the year, once for his role in WHAT THE BUTLER SAW.



SAYLOR CRESWELL (Geoffrey) arrives directly from a resident season at the Woodstock Playhouse, New York, where among his seven roles he played "Marchbanks" in an extended run of CANDIDA. Last year he appeared off-Broadway in Gordon Davidson's production of SAVAGES and on Broadway as "Martin Buber" in Dore Schary's HERZL. For public television he played "Lee Harvey Oswald" in a docu-drama called EYE WITNESS, shown this Fall. He trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London.



DONALD EWER (Sidney) will be remembered at ACT for his role last season as "Philip" in RELATIVELY SPEAKING, another Alan Ayckbourn play. He also was seen at ACT in IN CELEBRATION and SLEUTH. He came to Canada in 1954, having studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London and played in repertory theatre and in London's West End. He has directed and/or played at the Meadowbrook Theatre, Michigan, Philadelphia Drama Guild, Arena Stage, A.C.T. in San Francisco and other top regional theatres. In addition to more than 150 roles in radio and TV in Canada, Donald has played major roles at Stratford, Ontario, including the premiere of Mrojek's VATSLAV. An Obie Award winner in 1970 for SAVED, he also was seen off-Broadway in BILLY LIAR. His Broadway appearances include ALFIE, UNDER MILKWOOD and ONE IN EVERY MARRIAGE. Donald has also toured in productions of THE CARETAKER, HADRIAN VII and GIRL IN MY SOUP. Following this production, Donald will be seen in TRAVESTIES as "James Joyce" for the Philadelphia Drama Guild.



BARBARA LESTER (Marion) has been seen in nine Broadway plays, including BUTLEY with Alan Bates, THERE'S ONE IN EVERY MARRIAGE, ABELARD AND HELOISE with Diana Rigg, GRIN AND BARE IT, and JOHNNY NO-TRUMP with Sada Thompson. Earlier this year she was featured in the pre-Broadway production of THE BED BEFORE YESTERDAY with Carol Channing. She toured with the National Companies of BUTLEY, ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD, A DELICATE BALANCE, LUTHER and SEPARATE TABLES. Her many regional theatre appearances include the McCarter Theatre's productions of DESIGN FOR LIVING and A GRAVE UNDERTAKING, The American Shakespeare's productions of THE CRUCIBLE, the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia Drama Guild's production of HEDDA GABLER, and the Loretto-Hilton's productions of the REAL INSPECTOR HOUND and THE CRUCIBLE. In 1974 she played "Sheila" in the Arena Stage's production of RELATIVELY SPEAKING, for which she received the National Observer's citation as one of the ten best actors in the nation.



MARION LINES (Eva) played "Cecily" in TRAVESTIES and "Rosalind" in AS YOU LIKE IT for ACT this season and then returned to London. She trained for three years at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London. She has played major roles in repertory productions in Britain, including "Alice More" in Robert Bolt's A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS, "Catherine Mompesson" in the world premiere of Don Taylor's ROSES OF EYAM, and "Kay Conway" in J.B. Priestly's TIME AND THE CONWAYS. As a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company for two years, she played "Julia" in THE DUCHESS OF MALFI, and "Alice" in the company's Japanese tour of HENRY V. Marion came to America with the production of LONDON ASSURANCE. Her work in New York has included playing "Grace Tranfield" in Shaw's THE PHILANDERER at the Roundabout Theatre, "Angie" in the American premiere of CLAW by Howard Barker at the Manhattan Theater Club, and as "Miss Casewell" in THE MOUSETRAP at the Paper Mill Playhouse.

THE COMPANY continued



DIRECTOR RAYMOND CLARKE is a professional actor and director for television and stage and a noted academician. He graduated from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in 1961, and has since been seen with such companies as the Old Vic as "Sir Andrew Aguecheek" in TWELFTH NIGHT; The Chichester Festival in ST. JOAN; the National Theatre of Great Britain as "Guildenstern" in HAMLET with Peter O'Toole, directed by Laurence Olivier; and HOBSON'S CHOICE with Sir Michael Redgrave and Joan Plowright. He has also performed with Detroit's Meadowbrook Theatre, The Actors' Repertory Theatre in Toronto and The National Arts Centre Company in Ottawa. Raymond's television appearances include performances of THE FORSYTE SAGA, VANITY FAIR and CHARLEY'S AUNT. Raymond recently won acclaim for his one-man show OSCAR, an oral biography of Oscar Wilde which he has performed both in Canada and in the United States. His academic career has taken him to such schools as the Rome Seminaries, Marquette University, the universities of Saskatchewan and British Columbia and Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto where he has served as Director of the Acting Program.

THE STAFF



SCENIC DESIGNER BILL FORRESTER is a professor at the University of Washington. He has designed several sets for ACT, including TRAVESTIES, SLEUTH, OF MICE AND MEN, OH COWARD, SIZWE BANSI IS DEAD, RELATIVELY SPEAKING, BOCCACCIO and THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ENTIRE WORLD AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF COLE PORTER.



COSTUME DESIGNER SALLY RICHARDSON received her undergraduate degree from Whitman College in Drama and her masters degree from the University of Washington in costume design. She has been ACT's resident costume designer for the last year, having designed every production last season. In 1975 she designed costumes for THE RESISTIBLE RISE OF ARTURO UI, SLEUTH, OH COWARD and QUIET CARAVANS. Sally has also designed costumes for Intiman's productions of THE UNDERPANTS, CANDIDA and HEDDA GABLER, and The Empty Space Association's productions of DANDY DICK, THE SEA and RONNIE BWANA JUNGLE GUIDE.



LIGHTING DESIGNER JODY BRIGGS is also the assistant technical director at ACT this season, and is no stranger to ACT or Seattle. He has stage managed at both ACT and the Seattle Repertory Theatre and designed lights at ACT for YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN, YOUR OWN THING and THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE. He holds a master's degree from the University of Washington and a BFA from Boston University. He has designed sets and lights for more than 75 theatre productions, musicals and dance performances in stock and regional theatre across the United States and Canada. Most recently he was in Halifax where he was Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Drama League and member of the Board of Governors of Theatre Canada.



TECHNICAL DIRECTOR PHIL SCHERMER received his masters degree from the University of Washington. Phil has been ACT's technical director for the past year and a half. He is often the lighting designer, having designed for A CHRISTMAS CAROL, DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS and most other plays over the last ten years at ACT. He designed the sets for BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE and FIRE! at ACT. At Empty Space, Phil designed the lighting for AMERICAN BUFFALO and HEAT, among others. He has also designed sets for the lighting for The Seattle Repertory Theatre and its 2nd Stage.

THE STAFF Continued











PROPERTY MASTER SHELLEY HENZE SCHERMER graduated from the University of Washington in 1971. The Associate Set Designer this last season at ACT, Shelley was the Property Master for the four seasons prior to that. She designed the sets for LADYHOUSE BLUES, A CHRISTMAS CAROL, THE HEIRESS and the THREE CHEKOV PLAYS at ACT, and recently designed The Seattle Repertory's touring Rhythm Show. She designed the Washington State Bicentennial Touring Show, and has designed sets for three shows at The Empty Space.

STAGE MANAGER EILEEN MACRAE MURPHY has been ACT's stage manager for the last three seasons. She directed the Young ACT Company's touring show this year, and toured Alaska with ACT's production of OH COWARD. In the past seven years, she has stage-managed over 500 performances. A graduate of the University of Washington, she received her master's degree in directing. Eileen directed FIRE! at ACT in 1976. Among her other directing credits include INTERMEZZO, LOSERS, SUNDAY FUNNIES and THE PUBLIC EYE. She has acted in productions of THE CRUCIBLE, BAAL, ALICE IN WONDERLAND and PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD.

MUSICAL DIRECTOR STAN KEEN is now in his eighth season with ACT. A veteran of the New York theatre scene, Stan continued to tour internationally while maintaining a permanent residence in Seattle. He is Musical Director of the Emmy Award winning show BOOMERANG, seen locally on KOMO TV. For the past two seasons he has appeared as Guest Conductor of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra for its Inner City School Concerts. He has recently been commissioned to compose two works for Symphony Orchestra and Mime for the upcoming tour of the Spokane Symphony. Earlier this season he composed an original score for ACT's production of AS YOU LIKE IT. Stan also serves as Musical Director for the Seattle Repertory Theatre.

GENERAL MANAGER ANDREW M. WITT has had experience in various facets of theatre as a former actor, stage manager, and director. His directorial credits include BRECHT ON BRECHT for the Intiman Theatre, THE HOSTAGE at the Anacortes Community Theatre, YANKEE DOODLE for Seattle Junior Programs, productions for the University of Washington and the Marion Art Center in Massachusetts. He was technical director for the Bathhouse Theatre in Seattle and technical assistant for the National Playwrights Conference at the O'Neill Center in Waterford, Connecticut. Andy is on the Board of Directors of Allied Arts of Seattle, and a memeber of the Board and Executive Committee of the Arts Alliance of Washington State. A graduate of the Monson Academy in Massachusetts, Andy earned a B.A. in Theatre from Wesleyan University and an M.A. in Drama in acting/directing from the University of Washington.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR GREGORY A. FALLS is the founder of A Contemporary Theatre, where he has directed more than 50 productions, including this season's AS YOU LIKE IT. Last season Greg directed SIZWE BANSI IS DEAD, THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE, SCAPINO!, BOCCACCIO and A CHRISTMAS CAROL, a new adaptation that he wrote. Greg founded the Champlain Shakespeare Festival in Vermont, and was Artistic Director for four years, directing HAMLET, RICHARD II, and others. For ten years he was the Executive Director of the School of Drama at the University of Washington. A Fulbright Scholar, he is listed in WHO'S WHO IN THE AMERICAN THEATRE and WHO'S WHO IN THE WEST. Among other honors, in 1973 he received a Gold Medal fro ACTF, John Kennedy Center, for his contribution to American Theatre.

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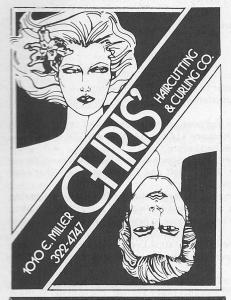
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BACKGROUND ABOUT THE PLAY

ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR enjoyed a successful run in London, first at the Library Theatre in Scarborough in 1972 and subsequently at the Criterion Theatre, London, in 1973, before opening to popular and critical acclaim in New York at the Music Box Theatre on Broadway, ending in March, 1976. It is currently playing in regional theatres throughout the country.



BACKGROUND ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

ALAN AYCKBOURN at 37 has provided London with ten plays over the last 11 years. but only a few have come to America. According to PLAYS AND PLAYERS MAGAZINE (a British publication), "Feelings about Ayckbourn are pretty varied in both critical and public circles. The literary brigade, relieved at the refreshing simplicity of Ayckbourn's comic writing and impatient to proclaim the arrival of a modern-day Noel Coward, have declared him to be an unsung, underestimated genius whose plays prove that the old values of 'craft' and 'polish' still count for somthing. Others, more helpfully, have championed Ayckbourn as a devastating and gifted chronicler of suburban misery and frustration as lived after a period of pervasive materialistic fallout."

Ayckbourn started his career in the theatre as an actor and stage manager in Edinburgh. He joined Stephen Joseph's Theatre-in-the-Round Company at Scarborough and started writing plays while a member of that company. He joined the BBC in Leeds as a radio and drama producer, and while there wrote RELATIVELY SPEAKING.

His other plays have included MIXED DOUBLES, THE NORMAN CONQUESTS, ABSENT FRIENDS, CONFUSIONS, HOW THE OTHER HALF LOVES, TIME AND TIME AGAIN, and ABSURD PERSON SINGLUAR. His RELATIVELY SPEAKING played at ACT Theatre last season.



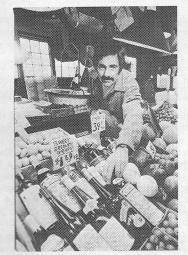
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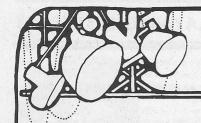


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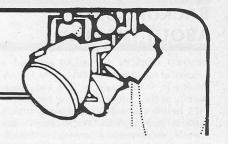
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BACKSTAGE

by Jack Leahy



As long as more people will pay admission to a theater to see a naked body than to see a naked brain, the drama will languish.

George Bernard Shaw

For the past twenty years, England has consistently produced some of the most brilliant theater to be seen in the Western world since the Elizabethan period. The body of work since the mid 1950's is remarkable for its high artistic consistency, technical innovation and intelligent perception of social forces and their effect on individual character.

With the exception of a handful of great playwrights since the Restoration, the English theater had been in a three and a half century slough of despondancy since the death of Shakespeare in 1616. However, with the production of John Osbourne's LOOK BACK IN ANGER in 1956, the long period of artistic sterility ended and drama flourished on the sceptered isle as perhaps it never had before.

For starters, one might mention a few active playwrights: Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard, Trevor Griffith, Simon Gray, Alan Ayckbourn, David Bond, Arnold Wesker, David Rudkin, David Storey, Peter Nichols, Anthony and Peter Shaffer, Robert Bolt and E.M. Whitehead. That's for starters. There are probably another fifty or so good writers in the wings, awaiting their opportunity.

In addition to this plentitude of playwrighting talent, the English government subsidizes three major theaters, including The National Theater, The Royal Shakespearean Company, and the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theater, not to mention financial support for the forty or so Repertory companies throughout the country. The three major national companies produce some forty or so new plays a year, and an even larger number is annually forthcoming from the Repertories.

Why does England produce far more — and some might say far better — playwrights than the United States? Even though our country has recently shown major signs of a theatrical awakening, it must be admitted that any realistic comparison of theater in both countries at this time shows that English theater is far superior.

First, there is the matter of tradition. The American theater — in terms of serious drama — really began to find itself in the 1920's. England, on the other hand, has a conscious dramatic tradition extending back to the medieval Miracle and Morality plays. Further, England has William Shakespeare, and the cultural influence of the Shakespearean tradition acts as a kind of touchstone that simply is not available to American playwrights.

Secondly, in England today, there is a prestige accorded to the theater that has no parallel in American culture. John Osbourne's LOOK BACK IN ANGER is generally accepted as a starting point for this dramatic renaissance which is now over twenty years old and shows no signs of weakening. There has been an enormous shift from the upper middle class drawing room comedies of the first half of the century to the varied subject matter, issues, techniques and audiences of the last two decades. In England, people pay more attention to the theater than they do to the novel. Rudkin, Stoppard and Storey have all written excellent novels, but like George Bernard Shaw, they have found the theater a much more amiable arena for their talents.

Comparatively speaking, the government of England puts much more public money into theater than we do. Over 120 theaters receive direct and indirect support from the National Arts Council. In addition, some sixty or so playwrights receive grants of five thousand dollars each year, and over three hundred smaller grants have been made available.

The network of theaters spread throughout England are expected to put on new work. Their government funding depends upon it. Thus, they are continually on the lookout for new talent — and many of the theaters support one or more resident playwrights whose work is consistently produced. Further, England's small area makes it easy for theater people to keep in touch with one another. A London producer is able to see promising new work within a few days of the opening, regardless of location.

Alan Ayckbourn, author of ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR, is a good example of how the system works. He began his career as an actor in a provincial rep where he was able to cultivate his instinct for what would and wouldn't work in front of an audience. His first plays were produced in the small theater at Scarborough, but soon his work found producers in London. Now, he is artistic director of the theater in Scarborough where his plays run in repertory with other resident playwrights of the company.

Another important difference between theater in England and America is the willingness of the audience to overlook bad critical notices. It is not so likely that new plays will be sledgehammered into oblivion by hostile reviews. The playwrights—a notoriously paranoid bunch on the subject of drama critics—are less apprehensive in England than they are here. They are far more willing to take a chance with new or unfashionable work, because even if the audience doesn't care for it, the public has not paid a small fortune for the privilege of being dismayed. Theater tickets are relatively inexpensive, and production costs are approximately ten times cheaper than on Broadway.

English radio and television, instead of prostituting or suffocating talent, as alas, is too often the case in America, are a great encouragement. The BBC presents over a hundred and twenty hours worth of new plays a year on television and almost five times that amount on radio. Leading playwrights such as Pinter, Nichols, Griffith and Rudkin spend as much time writing for television or radio as they do writing for the stage. In America, such a situation, if it existed, might serve only to compromise artistic intent, whereas in England it sharpens the playwright's skills and also pays him reasonably well.

Overall, American theater has much to learn from the English. The talent, technical know-how and energy are readily available. American audiences are far more mature in the 1970's than they have been in previous years and have come to expect much more of drama than a pleasant evening at the theater. The basic ingredients are all there, but in terms of serious drama, the American theater is still young — barely fifty years have elapsed since O'Neill began to change the direction of our stage history. The English have been developing and refining at least ten times longer than we have. Yet, art forms in America have a way of maturing quickly. The next twenty-five years may well prove to be our own dramatic renaissance. After all, the theater is one of the very few places left where people gather to confront the problems that occur in contemporary society — and emerge from the experience somewhat changed, and hopefully, more than a little enlightened.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TO OUR OPENING NIGHT AUDIENCE: Complimentary refreshments and wine will be served in our rehearsal room, backstage, following the opening night show, to honor the cast. You are invited to be ACT's guests. The refreshments for the 1977 opening night parties are courtesy of ACT's past and present presidents of the Board of Directors. The wine is courtesy of the Pike and Western Wine Merchants in the Soames-Dunn Building in the Pike Street Market. This year's opening night party committee includes Jeane Lipps, chairman; Jerry Peterson, Sue Vitale, Cindy Mazzola, Judy Kinnaird, Rochelle King, Susie Wingrove, Lauri Hawthorne, Dolly Mullens, and Jim DePartee. Board member Gena Gorasht is an ad hoc member of the committee.

IF YOU ARE LATE . . . ACT will ask latecomers to watch the play standing in the upper lobby until there is a suitable break in the play, specified by the director. If you have a last minute crisis, please consider donating your tickets to ACT, by calling the box office and giving them your seating locations. We will be happy to send you a letter so that you may use your donation as a tax deduction. If ACT is able to re-sell your tickets, it is a very real and appreciated contribution.

ACT wishes to thank all the volunteer committees and workers for their tremendous efforts and work on behalf of the theatre's activities.

DOCTORS expecting calls during performances may give their names and seat locations to the House Manager, and the number 285-9892 to their call service.

REFRESHMENTS available in downstairs lobby only, one-half hour before curtain time and during intermissions. No drinks may be taken into the seating area.

SMOKING in downstairs and outer lobby only.

TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS or making recordings during the performance is strictly forbidden.

NO TICKET REFUNDS CAN BE MADE, but subscribers may exchange tickets for any other performance of the same show, providing the box office receives the ticket 24 hours before date and time printed on the tickets. TICKETS for all ACT productions are available to students and senior citizens for \$2.50 during the half-hour prior to curtain time, if the performance is not sold out. Preview night tickets (the Wed. before opening night) can be purchased by everyone anytime at the box office, also for \$2.50. Curtain in 8:00.

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THANKS TO Murray Publishing for their cooperation in printing the program this season.

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The woven hangings/tapestries in the upper lobby during ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR are the collection of four Northwest weavers: Portland weaver Joan Peck; Sally Edward, Kirkland; Jean Scorgie, Salem; and Katherine Hoezknect, Seattle. The exhibit was coordinated by Ms. Peck. The four women either teach or work at their craft full-time as weaving professionals.



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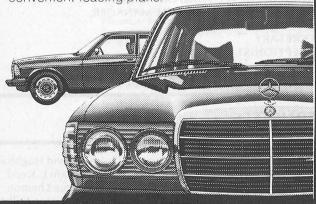
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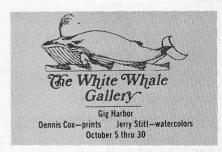


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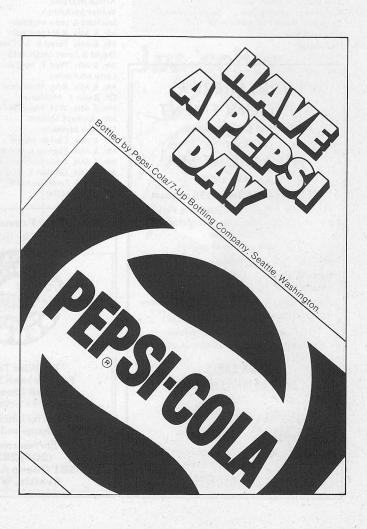
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